

NSC BRIEFING

12 June 1957

NORTH AFRICA

- I. Four clashes on 7 June between French army and Tunisians--13 dead-- show present acute tension between the two countries.
- A. On 20 May, France, in an attempt to end Tunisian support for Algerian rebels, suspended first installment--some \$5,700,000-- of \$34,500,000 loan agreed to in April.
- B. Tunisian premier Bourghiba retaliated by charging France had abrogated 1955 financial accord, appealing for foreign loans.
1. Soviet ambassador Paris said USSR would give Tunisia "anything it needs." Bourghiba, however, has indicated to US that acceptance "absolutely unthinkable."
- II. More violent phase current tension began 27 May when French army shelled Tunisian village harboring Algerian refugees.
- A. This and later clashes drew new demand by Bourghiba that 33,000-man French army (may now be down to 25,000) evacuate all Tunisia except strategic Bizerte base. (Tunisian forces total about 4,200).
- B. Bourghiba also ordered French troops remain in barracks. This resented by local French military commanders, who are un-cooperative with French embassy attempts to ease situation.
- C. Meanwhile, Tunisian political youth groups unusually active. (These bore brunt of 1954-5 guerrilla activity against French).
- III. US Ambassador Jones in Tunis believes only withdrawal of all French army units to Bizerte can ease situation.

DOS review(s) completed.

A. In any case, Tunisia will press for eventual severance all fiscal ties with France, but is unlikely to act hastily.

IV. In Algeria, massacre of 300 Algerian men and boys near Melouza on 28 May symptomatic of continuing deterioration of French position.

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- A. [redacted] incident is deterring Moslems from support of French. Similar massacres likely in future.
- B. Both Algerian National Liberation Front (FLN) and French now attempting to use incident to gain support in UN.
- C. Meanwhile, terrorism throughout Algeria is on upsurge.
1. At least 5 Moslems killed during all-day riot of European youth in Algiers 11 June in retaliation for bombing which killed 8 Europeans on 9 June.

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